

able, the adult males are indistinguishable. As it stands, even with the explanation, it has little relevancy or *raison d'être*.

"5. *Characters which are notoriously variable in a given group ought not, within that group, to be made the basis of a new name.*

"As an example of what is meant by this principle, the common starfishes (*Asterias forbesi* and *vulgaris*) of the New England coast may be cited. Their color is so remarkably variable that it would be folly to form subspecies based upon the color alone.

"6. *Characters which may be fairly interpreted either as individual peculiarities or as dichromatic diversity, ought not to be made the basis of a new name.*

"If this principle were honestly followed many new species and subspecies would be cancelled, and it would lead to much greater caution in basing new names upon single individuals.

"The above six principles are suggested, not with any idea that they will meet with universal approval, but in the hope that they may precipitate a discussion which will lead to definite results. At some not far-distant day let us trust, the charge of basing new names upon 'distinctions without a difference' will be one that cannot be brought legitimately against American zoologists."

Respecting "5" and "6," little need be said; they are certainly harmless, if not very helpful, for no experienced 'systematist' is likely to violate either.

The concluding paragraph of Mr. Clark's paper is given as clearly showing his good intentions. This republication of his paper in full, and the running comment thereon, may be taken as an attempt to comply with his desire that it "may precipitate discussion which will lead to definite results."—J. A. A.

Mascha's 'The Structure of Wing-Feathers.—This is an account¹ of an investigation by Dr. E. Mascha, under the direction of Professor R. von Lendenfeld of the Imperial German University in Prague, with the object of giving "a detailed account of the morphology of the wing-feathers of birds as used in flight," made with the hope of supplying "needed and valuable information for those interested in the great problem of aerial navigation." It is based on the examination of the quills of about 25 species, belonging to about a dozen orders, and comprising birds of most types of flight. Their histological structure is described in detail, and illustrated by figures grouped to form 16 plates. The text has apparently suffered in translation from the original German manuscript (to be published in the 'Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Zoologie,' here and there occurring terms and sentences by no means clearly expressed. At the end of the paper a 'summary of results' is given, in sixteen short para-

¹ The Structure of Wing-Feathers. By Dr. E. Mascha. Smithsonian Misc. Coll., Quarterly Issue, Vol. III, pp. 1-30, pl. i-xvi. May 6, 1905.

graphs. Similarity of structure in several important features is found to be common to the Owls and Caprimulgi which are not met with in any other groups. Whether or not the author's investigation will aid those interested in aerial navigation, it forms an important contribution to our knowledge of the structure of the flight feathers in birds.—J. A. A.

Jacobs's West Virginia Bird Notes.—Number IV of Mr. Jacobs's 'Gleanings'¹ consists of a briefly annotated list of the summer birds of Monongalia County, West Virginia. As the list, numbering 51 species, is based on observations made June 1, 1895, it is a good record for a single day's work. The list is followed by a few supplementary notes made on June 19 of the same year, and on August 21–23, 1897, which include a number of species not given in the formal list.—J. A. A.

Howe's 'Fifty Common Birds of Vermont.'—This brochure of 92 pages² "has been written for the purpose of creating among teachers and school children of our State a greater and a deeper love for Vermont birds." It is evidently well adapted to this end. Brief descriptions are given of fifty of the more common species met with in Vermont, with such further comment as should render them easily recognizable, aided by a text figure of each species, usually from photographs of mounted birds. Unfortunately some of them were taken from rather unsightly specimens. An appropriate introduction precedes the general text, which is followed by lists of birds noted by different observers at several localities, the species being given under their common English names. A line to each is sufficient, by use of abbreviations, to indicate the season, relative abundance, and date of earliest arrival. These lists are: Birds of Brattleboro and vicinity, by Mrs. Elizabeth B. Davenport; birds about St. Johnsbury, compiled by Miss Isabel M. Paddock; birds of Bennington and vicinity, by Dr. and Mrs. L. H. Ross; birds of Rutland County, by G. H. Ross; migration list of birds for Bristol County and vicinity, by A. C. Dike; also a nominal list of the birds of Vermont, based on

¹ Gleanings IV. | Some notes | on the Summer Birds | of | Monongalia County, | West Virginia. | — | Observations made near | Blacksville and Morgantown and along | the Monongahela River | — | By | J. Warren Jacobs, Waynesburg, Pa. | — | 1905 | Independent Printing Co.—Svo, pp. 11 and frontispiece. 15 cents.

² Fifty Common Birds of Vermont. By Carlton Dexter Howe, Principal of the Essex Junction High School, President of the Aududon Society of Vermont. = Circulars of Educational Information, No. XVIII. Prepared for Teachers and School Officers. Issued by the Department of Education, State of Vermont. Montpelier, 1905. Svo, pp. 92, with 50 text figures.